

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee,

On behalf of Adams Outdoor Advertising and the Outdoor Advertising Association of Michigan, I wish to express the industry's gratitude to Chairmans Gilbert, LaJoy, and Senator Tom George for the tremendous amount of support that they and their staffs have given the workgroup as we have worked long hours through many meetings over the past year to reach consensus on the legislative package consisting of Senate bills 567, 568 and 911.

I would also like to thank the Department, the Administration, and Scenic Michigan for their willingness to work closely with the industry to forge this compromise. Although, at times the discussions were spirited there was always a desire of everyone to stay at the table and work through our differences.

When we began this process some fifteen months ago it was our intent to Cap the number of billboards in the State of Michigan, to insure that the existing inventory of signs could be fully utilized all while preserving the Departments ability to manage Michigan's scenic highways. I am very pleased to announce that the bills before this committee today strike a delicate balance between competing interests while accomplishing all of these goals.

Since, the last time I was before this committee in February there has been some significant changes to the legislation and I would like to review the major areas of revision with you now.

SB 568:

Senate Bill 568 places into law specific guidelines by which the Michigan Department of Transportation shall issue vegetation management permits. This bill places into statute a straightforward process that allows for appropriate department oversight, while granting the industry, thousands of Michigan job providers and the numerous charities which rely upon outdoor advertising assurance that they will have an unobstructed view of their advertising messages. Specifically, Senate Bill 568:

- Grants the motorist an unobstructed viewing window of 5 seconds at posted speed limits
- Offers the department discretion to deny or modify vegetation management where necessary to protect the roadside environment or insure the safety of the motoring public
- Gives industry a clear set of achievable criteria to secure a permit to trim vegetation
- Puts in motion the creation of an appeals process to ensure that the law will be interpreted fairly for years to come
- Imposes severe penalties for careless and illegal trimming
- Sets forth criteria for the use of variable message display technology,
- Increases the annual registration fees paid by the industry by 100 %

SB567:

Senate Bill 567 for the first time places a cap on billboards in the state of Michigan by limiting the number of permits to that which exist upon the date of enactment. This bill also requires that construction begin within one year of enactment for those sites that possess valid permits but for which no structure has yet to be built. In a key provision designed to limit the growth of new billboards within this one year period, a permit holder may, in lieu of constructing a new billboard, exchange those “unbuilt” permits for an interim permit on a basis of 3 for 1. For every 3 “unbuilt” permits surrendered the Department shall issue 1 interim permit for construction at a later date.

In closing, I wish to thank again the Chairman, the Sponsors and their staffs and express the support of the entire Outdoor Advertising Industry for the House substitutes for SB 567 and 568.